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Elizabeth Gaskell Norton
November 16, 1927

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THE

WELCOME VISITOR;

OR,

THE GOOD UNCLE.

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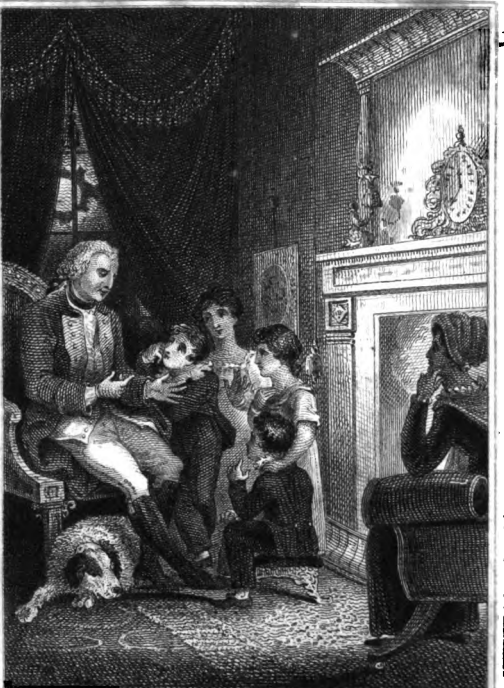

See Page 8.

Published Sept.r 1.1820. by Harris & Son. corner of St Pauls.

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THE

WELCOME VISITOR,

OR

THE GOOD UNCLE:

BEING A COLLECTION OF

ORIGINAL STORIES,

CONTAINING

SEVERAL WELL-AUTHENTICATED ANECDOTES,

DISPLAYING

Striking Traits

OF

VIRTUE AND HEROISM IN EARLY LIFE.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR HARRIS AND SON,
CORNER OF SAINT PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

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THE

WELCOME VISITOR;

OR,

THE GOOD UNCLE.

"GOOD morning to you, my dear children; I have some good news to tell you," said Mrs. Percy, as she came down to breakfast one cold frosty morning in the middle of December. "I have just received a letter, the contents of which will give you all pleasure. Your good uncle Mordaunt is coming to pay us his annual visit this Christmas." 'Oh, is he, mamma? how glad I am!' said they, all in a breath. 'And which day

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is he coming, mamma? And will he bring his Blacky and Nelson with him, mamma? And will he bring any present for us, I wonder? Oh! I do wish the day was come,—which day is it, mamma? I hope it is before Christmas, because of his being here on Christmas-day to take us to church, and to give Christmas-boxes to the poor people, and to carve the roast-beef, and to drink all our healths, and to play at snap-dragon in the great hall; and to tell us stories. Oh! I hope he will come before Christmas,—will he, mamma? You don't answer any of our questions, mamma.' "My dear," said Mrs. Percy, "how can I speak when you are all talking together? before I can answer one question, you ask me another, and then go on with obser-

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vations till you come to questions again; and how can your curiosity be satisfied at that rate? Now sit down and eat your breakfast, and I will tell you all I know; that is, all your uncle's letter tells me."

Isabella poured out a dish of tea for her mother, Catharine handed her the toast and muffin, Edward and John took their bread and milk, and then all waited with impatience to hear what their mother had to say.

"I am afraid I cannot satisfy you as to the day exactly," said she, "for he says I must not expect him till I see him; but I believe he will be here soon, because I am to get the chintz-room ready for him directly; and I think he will certainly come before Christmas-day, because he mentions the

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twenty-third as the latest day. And as to his black servant and his dog, you know he never goes any where without them, nor ever will while they are both alive."

The rest of this conversation I will leave to the imagination of my readers, and proceed to give them some acquaintance with the man whose arrival at Percy Hall was to be a matter of so much joy and satisfaction.

Col. Mordaunt was a clever and lively old gentleman, whose mind, naturally active and intelligent, was furnished with a variety of information, which travelling in foreign countries is calculated to bestow. He had spent the greatest part of his life abroad, and had something to shew, and something to tell, of almost every nation of the known habitable globe. His black servant had

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followed him from Jamaica, his cane was a bamboo from Africa, his snuff-box came from Bermuda, the ring that sparkled on his little finger was a diamond he had himself purchased at the mines of Golconda, and his dog was from Newfoundland. He had, besides these articles of daily use, a collection of curiosities from every country he had visited; and as he was never tired of showing and relating their histories, even to children, it may easily be imagined what a welcome and entertaining guest he was wherever he went; and when we consider further that he was remarkably fond of his widowed sister, and her innocent children, we shall not wonder at the sensation of delight that was occasioned by the expectation of his arrival at Percy Hall.

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He was much interested in the formation of the minds and morals of his young relatives; and was anxious, as far as he had it in his power, to assist his sister in the important task that now devolved upon her. His line of life did not permit him to be so much at the Hall as he could wish; but, as long as he was in England, he made a point of spending some part of every year in the society he so much loved. A second letter decided the day for Col. Mordaunt's arrival at the family mansion; and never was a day ushered in with heartier welcome, or an arrival hailed with louder demonstrations of joy.

The children jumped and clapped their hands, as the carriage entered the park-gate; Mrs. Percy smiled while the tears started into her eyes; even the

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domestics seemed to partake in the general satisfaction, and stood at the door ready to assist him to alight.

No where was the joyful season of Christmas more happily and merrily celebrated than at Percy Hall; their mornings were spent with their good uncle in reading entertaining and instructive books, in visiting the cottages, and making such presents to the poor people as best suited their respective wants, in playing at battledore and shuttlecock in the great hall, and many other Christmas games with which my young readers, no doubt, are well acquainted. The evenings, however, were their greatest delight; it was the custom of the children, as soon as ever the dinner things were cleared away, and the old gentleman had drunk his wine,

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and taken his usual quantum of snuff, to draw round the fire, or rather round his armed chair, which was by the fireside, and listen to long stories, or anecdotes of different sorts and kinds, that he used to tell them. Some were true accounts of what had really happened, some were stories that he had read or heard, and some were the production of his own imagination.

In relating these stories, he always contrived to blend instruction with amusement; and made it his care to improve the heart and disposition, while he informed the minds, of his juvenile audience. He was particularly pleased when he could relate an anecdote of a young person who had given any proof of virtue, or displayed any peculiar goodness of heart, by which he could

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rouse their emulation and laudable ambition.

It was with a mother's anxiety and pleasure that Mrs. Percy, as she sat at her work-table on the opposite side of the fire, would attend to these interesting stories, while she watched the countenances of her children, and listened to the remarks they made.

On one of these evenings, when they were all settled in their usual places round the fire, and poor old Nelson was fast asleep on the rug, the following conversation took place.

"Do you remember, uncle," said Edward, "the story you told us once, of the three wishes, and the black pud-

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dings? We were talking about it the other evening when we drank tea with the little Middletons at Middleton Grove; and one of them said, how foolish the old man was to wish for black puddings, and how many better things he might have had; and then we all began saying what we should wish for, if a fairy was to come to *us;* and Tom Middleton, who is a great coward, said he should wish to be made of *iron* all over, because then he should be *safe* and nobody could hurt him, nor any animal either, for that, if they were to try, they would only hurt themselves against his iron body;—and so we all burst out laughing, and asked him what he was afraid of; and one of them said when he had got his wish, he would soon be tired of his "*iron body,*" and wish

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to be flesh and blood again; and then two of his wishes would be gone in nothing."

"And then there was that idle Arthur," said John, "he said he should wish never to have any lessons to learn, or any sums to do, or any thing to do at all, but to have somebody to dress him and put him to bed; or what should you think (said he) of being allowed to *live* in bed?—And this made us all burst out laughing again; and we told him we could let him live in a blanket *now* if he liked, and we would give him a toss by way of trial."

"I think you had reason to laugh, indeed," said Col. M; "but did not you, when your laugh was over, try to shew these mistaken boys the moral of the tale, and persuade them that ——?"

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'Oh yes,' said Catharine, interrupting him, 'Isabella told them all that *you* told *us;* as, how foolish it is to wish for any thing out of our reach, and that we should be contented with what we have and with our station in life, for that we none of us know what will make us happy, and all that, and a great deal more besides which I don't remember; and so a great many of them gave up their wishes, but the cowardly Tom still said he wished he was made of iron, because then he should have nothing to cry about *all* day; and idle Arthur persisted he should be quite happy if he had nothing to do.'

"Well, I know one wish that I have got," said Isabella, "that I am sure—no, it is foolish to be *sure*—but I think *really would* make me happy, much hap-

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pier even than I am now. And I think you would all wish the same, mamma and all, so it cannot be a foolish wish." "Ay, I guess what it is," said Edward, "and I am sure I wish it too. It is that uncle M. would tell us a story: is not that your *wish*, Isabella?" "Oh yes, a story; and I am sure I wish it too," said Catharine. "And I too," cried out John. "*I* wish for a story, certainly," said Isabella, "but that is not the wish I meant; mine is a much greater wish than that." "A greater wish!" said they, "let us hear." "Oh, I know," said little Johnny, "she wishes that Christmas would always last, and never be over." "No," answered Isabella, "that is one of the foolish wishes, and mamma would not join in it, I am sure." "Well then, what can it be? is it a wish that uncle M. would

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join in?" said Catharine. "Why that is what I am not quite sure about," returned Isabella; "I hope he would, but I cannot be sure." "Well, let us know what it is, and then I can tell you," said Col. M. "Well then, my wish is, that uncle would live with us all his life," said Isabella; "now don't you all wish that?" "Oh yes, that we do," said they all at once; "and so does mamma, I can see by her face; and so does my uncle, I can see by his."

"Only he knows it is impossible," said Mrs. Percy, "and your uncle will never wish for what cannot or ought not to be."

"Well, as I cannot give you your *great* wish, my dear Isabella," said Col. Mordaunt, kissing her, "let us see if I cannot, at least, indulge you in your

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little one; I think I can tell you a story, or a fairy tale, or whatever you like to call it, on this very subject, if mamma agrees to the wish." Mrs. Percy readily joined her voice to that of her eager children for the story their good uncle promised them; he therefore immediately complied, and began the following tale.

THE WONDERFUL BOX,

OR

THE SEARCH AFTER HAPPINESS.

OSMOND, an only and favourite son, was seventeen years of age when his father was stretched on the bed of sickness, visited by one of those diseases which baffle the power of medicine.

A short time before he drew his latest

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breath, as he was pouring out his soul in fervent prayer for the happiness and prosperity of his darling son, suddenly he heard a violent clap of thunder, which shook the bed on which he lay. A more than earthly light burst into his chamber, and one of those beings called fairies, or genii, stood before him.

"Expiring mortal," said the genius, in a tone of mingled sweetness and dignity, "I have heard thy pious prayer, and I come to answer it. To bestow happiness is not within my power, nor that of any of our race. It is a treasure which has ever been beyond the controul even of the fairies. I will, however, render what assistance I can command to thy beloved Osmond, in the pursuit of it. I will give him power, during the lapse of twelve moons, to assume whatever cha-

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racter or condition of life he may choose to make trial of; and with this power in his hands there can be little doubt of his success. Take this little ivory box; it contains a secret spring, which as often as he shall press with the fore-finger of his right hand, his wish, whatever it may be, will instantly be gratified." Saying these words, the genius vanished, and left the sick man overcome with astonishment.

It was long before he could collect his scattered senses, and believe that what he had seen and heard was not a vision, or the effect of delirium occasioned by his disease. The box, however, which remained in his hand, convinced him it was no delusion; and by degrees, as he became more and more convinced of the reality, he gave himself up to the

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most soothing transports of delight and joy.

His frame, however, was too weak to support such violent emotion, and feeling himself beginning to sink, he summoned his son to his bed-side, and after informing him of what had passed, he gathered up his remaining strength, and addressed him in the following words:—

"Such, my son, is the inestimable gift which to you alone is to belong. You can hardly fail of obtaining solid and lasting happiness with such a possession. I would only urge you to be prudent in your search, and to remember, that as happiness is only to be found in a life of discretion and virtue, so it can never remain with vice and wickedness. Be wise, therefore, O my son, in the use you make of your power, and choose with

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discretion, that you may lose no time in discovering what you may not otherwise find till it is too late. For my own part, my happiness is complete in seeing yours secured to you, and I shall now die content."

As he uttered these words he sunk back, exhausted with the effort he had made, and in a short time afterwards his soul was among the number of the departed!

The young Osmond was at first inconsolable for the loss of his father: he bewailed his death with loud lamentations, and the thought of his valuable box entirely departed from his mind. But when the usual time of mourning for his father was elapsed, he called to mind his last gift, and resigned his mind with complacency to the prospect of feli-

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city before him. He then recollected his father's last words. "Prudent in my search," said he: "what could he mean by that? Surely I shall not have far to look: this box contains happiness in itself; I know what will make me happy, and every thing is at my command. I will not, therefore, as my father seemed to fear, lose time in seeking it, but will instantly endow myself with perfect happiness. I will have riches and power, and every thing that riches and power can bestow." So saying he touched the spring of his box, and immediately he found himself in a magnificent palace, surrounded with every luxury and every convenience that art could invent, or fancy dictate. His attendants, who were numerous, were ready to anticipate his commands. His garments were sump-

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tuous, composed of the finest materials, and adorned with the richest gems. His apartments were splendidly furnished, and perfumed with all the odours of the East. Bands of music regaled his ears with the softest airs, and the most costly repasts were ready in an instant to obey his call.

Osmond surveyed the scene around him with delight and wonder. "Here," said he, "I will dwell for ever in happiness and security: I am no longer obliged to submit to the irksome controul of tutors and guardians, nor to waste all the powers of mind and body in what they call 'the acquirement of knowledge.' No, I have done with poring over books from morning till night; I am now my own master, and will indulge myself in the pleasures of life, and pur-

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sue employments more suited to my taste, and more natural to my age. I must first compose my mind after the fatigue of this surprising change, and to-morrow I will divert myself as I please." So saying, he retired to his place of repose, and spent the remainder of that day and the ensuing night in profound slumber.

The next morning Osmond awoke as the first rays of the sun darted in at the painted windows of his apartment, and he rose with a beating heart, exulting in the anticipation of perfect enjoyment. After regaling on a sumptuous repast, he ordered his attendants to prepare for his favourite diversion, hunting; in which amusement he continued engaged till the sun was beginning to sink in the western wave, when he returned home to rest

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and refreshment. The next day he hunted again, and when he was tired of hunting he varied his sport, and contrived for himself a perpetual succession of diversions.

In this manner passed his days, in one continued round of selfish amusement: he had no want unsatisfied, no wish unfulfilled: to please and amuse *himself* was all his care; yet Osmond looked in vain for the happiness he had expected. In a few days, this way of life lost its charm: his diversions being his sole object, and always at his command, lost their power of amusing. He went to the chase without eagerness, pursued it without enjoyment, and returned fatigued and disappointed. He was no sooner accustomed to his costly fare than his relish for it departed: he came to the

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banquet without appetite, and returned from it with disgust. He still felt something was wanting to make him happy, yet could not tell what it was. Unwilling, however, to suppose he had mistaken the road to happiness, he tried to persuade himself he should obtain it at last. "I have confined myself too much to one spot," said he; "no one can expect to be happy who is shut up, even in a palace; how foolish I have been to immure myself in this manner! I will go abroad amongst men, and dazzle their eyes with my wealth and magnificence." So saying, he seated himself in a splendid chariot, drawn by six beautiful milk-white horses, with costly trappings of crimson and gold; the postilions in white livery, brocaded with crimson and gold; six out-riders in the same livery, on

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horses of the same colour. In this splendid array, he ordered his charioteer to drive through the most frequented parts of the city.

This equipage had the intended effect; the windows of every house near which it passed were crowded with spectators to view this beautiful sight; and Osmond's heart glowed with delight as he observed the countenances of so many of his fellow creatures all turned to him with admiration and wonder, and heard with rapture their exclamations of surprise and envy.

However, this pleasure was but momentary; and though he promised himself a repetition of it on the morrow, yet the remainder of that day was passed without pursuit, and without enjoyment.

Day after day he repeated this display

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of his wealth, till he found that, as it lost its novelty, it lost its attraction also. The windows were gradually deserted, and those few passengers whom he met in his path, only raised their eyes to let them down again, or shrugged their shoulders with a look of pity and contempt.

Vexed and mortified, he returned home out of humour with himself and with every body about him. And now that the demon of ill-temper possessed him, he not only felt a want of happiness, but he experienced positive misery.

While looking round for the cause of his uneasiness, he at last hit upon another expedient to relieve himself from it; and attributing it to the entire solitude in which he lived, he decided upon mixing more in society. He therefore com-

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manded his attendants to give notice, that the wealthy and liberal Osmond would prepare a magnificent festival the ensuing evening, and that he invited all of a certain rank to partake of it.

Accordingly, crowds assembled in his splendid apartments on the night appointed; and the astonishment and admiration that was expressed were such as to give him complete satisfaction.

Osmond stalked about from one gaily-illuminated saloon to another, to receive the compliments aud flattering acknowledgments of his guests; and he had the satisfaction of hearing many an encomium on his hospitality, and many a longing desire for even the half of his wealth.

All this so completely answered his purpose, that when the company rose to

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depart, he gave notice that in future his table would be spread, and his doors open, in the same hospitable and magnificent style, to all who chose to visit him.

The next night, therefore, and the next, his hall was filled with guests, and his proud heart swelled with delight at the homage that was paid him. But men are soon weary of witnessing the prosperity of others, and of rendering homage which they cannot receive in return; and as the selfish Osmond took no pains to gain the love or esteem of his guests, their numbers diminished by degrees, till his splendid apartments were at last entirely deserted!

This was a mortification which his temper could not brook; and unable to endure the disappointment which the

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sight of his empty palace presented to him, he suddenly took the resolution of quitting it, and of seeking a situation less subject to the caprice of others.

He accordingly dismissed his attendants, and taking nothing with him but his box, which, as he observed, contained every thing in itself, he set out on his search.

He passed unobserved through the streets amongst crowds, who all seemed engaged with their own concerns, and intent on some pursuit either of business or pleasure.

"I begin to think my poor father was right," said he, as he walked along, "and that I shall have yet to *seek* out the situation in which happiness is to be found; however, I shall not be long in finding it; I can take a survey here of

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all the different states and conditions of life, and when I see one that suits me, I have only to touch the spring of my box, and I can have what I please, and be what I please. This day, therefore, I will devote to this pursuit, and to-morrow's sun shall find me in possession of lasting and perfect happiness."

Full of this idea, he set out upon his ramble. He roamed about for a long time in a desultory mood, and traversed many a street and lane before he could come to any determination respecting his future way of life. He saw many whose countenances bespoke content and happiness, but they were those who pursued some line of business, and *that*, he knew, would never suit him. "Neither my mind nor my body are fitted to endure fatigue," said he: "were I a plodding

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attorney, a busy merchant, or an industrious mechanic, I might perhaps drag on a miserable existence; but to be happy, would be out of the question; and in a servile or laborious occupation I could not possibly exist. Yet when I had nothing to do, and every thing to enjoy, I was not happy: where then is happiness to be found?"

As he ended this soliloquy, he gazed around him with an anxious and dissatisfied look; his distressed countenance at last attracted the notice of an elderly gentleman in black, who was walking by, and who stopped to ask him what was the matter.

Osmond was struck with the benevolence of his countenance, and with the kind and encouraging tone of his voice.

"Have you lost your way, my

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good sir?" said the stranger: "where were you going? perhaps I can direct you." 'No, sir,' answered Osmond in a sorrowful voice, 'I was going no where.' "You are in affliction then," said the other: "will you allow me to sympathise with you? might I be entrusted with the cause of your uneasiness, perhaps I could——" 'No, sir,' said Osmond again, 'I am not in affliction, and I have nothing to make me uneasy.'—"You are in some little distress or difficulty, I imagine," said the gentleman; "my house is just by, will you let me offer you anything it contains?"—'No,' said Osmond with a deep sigh; 'I have every thing in abundance, and I want for nothing.'—"Well, then," said the stranger, "I can only hope you will forgive the impertinence

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of my mistake, and I must now hasten on, for there are many distressed whom I am so happy as to have it in my power to relieve; and a poor family is now waiting in anxiety for my appearance."

So saying, he walked hastily on; and Osmond looked after him till he turned a corner of the street, and was quite out of sight.

He then proceeded a few paces with a slow and heavy step, till, beginning to feel hungry, he turned into a house whose sign shewed it to be a place of refreshment for travellers, and ordered a repast.

While it was preparing, he seated himself in one of the apartments, and was again plunged in gloomy reverie, when he was roused by the entrance of

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two young men who were talking eagerly and loudly.

"Congratulate me, my dear friend," said one, "was ever mortal so fortunate as I am, or blessed with such unlooked-for happiness!"

These words, and the exulting tone in which they were pronounced, caught Osmond's attention, and looking up at the person from whose mouth they proceeded, he saw a fine young officer in regimentals, whose eye sparkled with joy, and whose countenance glowed with delight.

He listened attentively to their conversation, in order to find out what could produce this boasted happiness; while the young officer continued; "Only think," said he to the other, "I have an appointment in India which will keep me on that station for five years!"

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Osmond's surprise was excessive to hear of a five years' residence in a distant country being a matter of joy! He listened again while the other answered, "Indeed, my dear Gustavus, truly I rejoice in your good fortune! It is to be hoped also that you will have plenty to do when you get there." "Oh, yes," said Gustavus, "I have much to be thankful for on that score also. We shall have hard work the whole time, I am told!" Osmond could scarcely believe his senses. "Hard work," said he to himself, "in a sultry climate, with all the hardships of a soldier's life; and this for five years together! I do not understand it;" and unable to contain his surprise, he said aloud, "Do you really mean, sir, that you are rejoicing in the prospect of quitting your

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native country for India?" "Yes, sir," said the officer in a tone of animation, "and you would do the same if you had a mother in distress with a family to support, to whom you were only a burthen at home, but whom you could relieve by your exertions abroad."

Here they were interrupted by the entrance of the host, who came to inform Osmond the repast was ready; and Gustavus, after shaking his young friend cordially by the hand, and bidding him farewell, retired to rest. "I must rise before the sun to proceed on my journey to-morrow," said he, "and by travelling rapidly, I may hope to join my regiment the day after. Farewell, take care of my mother and sisters, and send the male youngsters after me, if you can."

Osmond retired to rest thoughtful

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and melancholy: this incident of Gustavus had left an impression upon his mind, and he felt half inclined to be a soldier. Yet when he considered the trials and hardships he must undergo in that condition, he shrunk from the idea; and though he felt that such happiness as the delighted Gustavus seemed to enjoy could hardly be too dearly bought, he was still in hopes he should be able to obtain it at a cheaper rate. He then recollected the gentleman he had met in the streets. "He looked happy too," said he to himself, "and he mentioned that he was so; the very word struck me, and I have not forgotten it. I wonder in what he found *his* happiness; if I see him again, I will follow him, and find out the secret."

At break of day, Osmond rose from

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his bed, and walked to the window of his apartment. It was at the back of the house, and looked upon a pleasing prospect. The sun was just peeping above the horizon, and its first rays illumined the hills and mountain tops, while the valleys, to which the light had not yet penetrated, were left in darkness. The shepherds were loosing their flocks from the folds, and scattering them over the hills on one side, while on the other were herdsmen driving their cattle to be milked. Down the winding lane near the window at which Osmond stood, a peasant was driving his team to the plough. His countenance glowed with health and vigour, and he "whistled o'er the furrowed land," the picture of content and happiness.

The sight of this, in his present for-

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lorn and uncomfortable state, almost made Osmond wish to be a peasant. But he checked himself with this thought; "A peasant is happy because he was born to be a peasant, and knows no happier state. No one who has been accustomed to the charms of luxury and idleness could endure the coarse fare and hard toil of a labouring man. Yet what charms do I find in luxury and idleness? Well, I need not be too hasty, I can make myself a peasant whenever I please, I will therefore try other stations first."

He then left his chamber and returned to the room which he had occupied the day before, and which looked into the street. Here he again yawned, and resorted to the window. It was early, and the bustle of the town had not yet

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commenced. The smoke was rising in curling clouds from the chimneys of the houses, and now and then an early riser passed by.

Osmond saw little to attract his attention; the houses before him were chiefly tradesmen's shops or private dwelling-houses. He gazed upon the one immediately opposite him; it was an ironmonger's, and in the window over the shop he observed a young man sitting before a table reading a large book. Osmond watched him for some time, and took notice that he never once looked up from the book he was reading. The table also at which he sat was covered with books. This sight occupied Osmond's attention for a considerable time, and his surprise was great to see the unremitting application

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which the youth bestowed upon such a dull thing as a book. He continued to watch him; and as he still went on reading, the idea occurred that he must be doing it by compulsion, as a task; and feelings of pity and compassion succeeded to those of wonder and astonishment.

"Poor youth," said he, "I pity thee from my heart: condemned to mental labour, thine is indeed the hardest lot of all!"

At this instant the host entered with the morning repast, and Osmond could not help observing to him what he had seen, and inquiring who he was,—"Oh, Sir!" said the host, "you need not mind him, it is all his own way. He is a young lawyer who is about to plead a cause in which he takes a mint of inte-

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rest, and so is fortifying himself, as one may say, Sir, before-hand." "Fortifying himself!" said Osmond, "what does that mean?" "Why, Sir, you see, this is the first cause that he has ever pleaded, and as he is but a youngster, it is an even chance whether he does not begin where he should end, or make any other such raw blunder, which would lose him his cause in a trice. He has had these lodgings this fortnight, and not a morning (Sundays excepted) but I have seen him by dawn-light at his books. It is to be hoped he will make head and tail of it, for it seems a matter of life and death to him."

Osmond's interest was excited, and he encouraged his host to proceed. "And when is this cause to be pleaded?" he asked, "and what are the particulars?"

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"Why, as to particulars," answered he, "why I am not very well master of them, to be sure; I only go by the talk of the town, which runs that it is all about some money that is disputed between a young lady and an old gentleman. The young lady, they say, is just about to come of age, and there was some property left her by an old relation beyond sea, only just as all her friends had made sure of it, and her poor sweetheart had made sure of *her*, out pops this old curmudgeon of a miser, and claims it all: and so there has been a great piece of work, and a power of money lost on both sides, by going to law. This, to be sure, is as nothing to the old man, who has hoards upon hoards, but to the poor lady it is a sad matter, for it has brought her friends to much distress, and now it all hangs

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upon this day's trial. And what is more, the match must be broken off if it does not end well, for the young man's friends will not hear of his marrying her without money. He is almost frantic, to be sure, for his love had quite got the better of him; but she, poor soul! is as meek as a lamb, and only frets and pines away for the expense it gives her parents."

"This is an interesting affair, indeed," said Osmond, "and I wish the young lawyer success in his cause." "Ay, poor Percival," returned the host, "he has need to quiver and quake, for the bridegroom as was to be, is his intimate friend."

"Indeed," said Osmond, "then I do not wonder at his anxiety to make himself master of his cause." "Ay, (returned the other,) but I often think

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he will do his noddle no good by poking up there, and poring over law-books, when all the world are asleep in their beds; and then when he comes out, he is all over white like, and puckered up like a ghost."

Here the communicative host retired, and Osmond, for a time, forgot his own concerns, in that of poor Percival and his friend. He waited with impatience till the hour of trial, determined to attend it himself, and be witness to the result.

At length the long-expected hour arrived, and Osmond heard the young barrister plead in the young woman's behalf with so much eloquence, force, and judgment, that he gained complete success.

The hall rang with the shouts and huzzas of the multitude, who had assembled, some from curiosity, but many from

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feelings of real interest, to hear this interesting trial; and when Osmond heard their acclamations, and the congratulations that were poured on the successful Percival from all sides, and above all, when he saw the grateful countenances of the happy couple and their friends, as they advanced to express their thanks for his zealous exertions, he envied him his happiness, and longed to experience the same sensations. "I think I *must* be a lawyer," said he, as he walked away from the hall of justice; "and yet it is sad *drudgery* to study the law,—and such a plodding business after all!"

In this unsettled state he roamed about till evening, and another day terminated without finding him in the state of happiness he was seeking! The next day he again sallied forth, and renewed

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his search, though less confident of immediate and complete success.

"It seems," said he, "that every one is happy except myself; and the more I see of happiness in others, the more difficult it seems for me to obtain it. My box has been of no use to me as yet, and if the twelve moons should have passed before I have found the object of my search, it will then be good for nothing. Oh, what a hard fate is mine!"—As he ended these words, he looked about him, and found that he had strayed from the city, and was standing at the gate of a beautiful garden, in which stood a neat and elegant mansion. He stopped an instant to admire it. The house stood on a lawn as rich and smooth as velvet. On one side was a grove of the finest trees, and on the other, a garden laid out

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with shrubs and flowers that were in full blossom, and bordered by a luxuriant shrubbery. Here and there the windings of a clear stream shewed themselves through the trees, and the sound of a distant cascade was heard. The whole scene was highly cultivated, and seemed to indicate the peace and comfort of its inhabitant.

As Osmond stood at the gate admiring its various beauties, he heard the sound of voices, and his attention was arrested. "Stop a minute for papa," said a young and sprightly voice, "he is coming directly." "Oh, what *is* he waiting for?" said a still younger and more infantine accent. "Oh, he is only gone to fetch the money: you would be sorry, little impatient, to go without it, you know. See here he comes."

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The door of the house then opened, and Osmond beheld descending the steps, the very gentleman who had addressed him with so much kindness a day or two before.

"Now," thought he, "here is another opportunity for me to make a choice." As the gentleman left the house he was lost among the trees, but he soon re-appeared, leading in each hand a female child, and followed by another somewhat older, who led by the hand a rosy and smiling little boy.

They soon approached the gate where Osmond was standing, and as he made way for them to pass, he had a nearer view of their innocent and happy countenances.

"Papa," said one of the girls, "this little hurry-scurry would hardly wait for

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you; but I think we should have looked foolish enough when we got to the poor woman's house, and found we had nothing to give her." "And besides," said the gentleman, "I hope you mean to let me share your happiness?" "Oh, yes, indeed we do, papa," said they all, "it would not be any pleasure without you —I do not mean *any* pleasure, but not half the pleasure that it will be with you. You know we never could have known how to get the money without you; for we might have wished, and wished, and wished, and never have got farther than wishes. I am sure I should never have thought of saving my allowance, or any thing else. Oh, how happy the poor woman will be, and the old man too, and the poor girl that has been working so hard all this time! And yet, papa, I

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don't think they will be so happy as we are; happier they cannot be. I am sure nobody can ever be happier than I am now." "Nor than I am," said the delighted father. "Nor than I, and I," cried out all the children.

This conversation passed as they went along, and Osmond followed them unobserved, listening to the words they uttered, and waiting to discover in what the happiness of this merry group consisted. "If it is their house, or garden, or shrubbery, or cascade," said he to himself, "I can have the same in an instant; but as I was not happy when I had all and more than these, I suppose it must depend upon some other cause. I will follow, and see where he goes."

They went on till they came to the door of a miserable-looking hovel, and

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great was Osmond's surprise to see the stranger stoop his head to enter the lowly roof, his children following him with as much eagerness as if it was a place of public amusement. In a few minutes they returned, and Osmond heard their names uttered with thanks, and praises, and blessings, from those they had visited.

They then pursued their walk, and turned into another street, where they stopped at the door of a low and plain, but neat-looking cottage, into which they entered also, Osmond standing without, but so as to see and hear what passed within. There was a large concourse of children assembled, with whom they seemed to converse. He could not tell what they said, for they all seemed to talk at once, and the confusion of voices

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made it impossible to hear distinctly; and he wondered at the gentleman's choosing to leave his garden, and his flowers, and his elegant mansion, to spend hour after hour in such a place and in such company. "Surely," thought he, "this cannot be the way to find happiness! or this man and his children must have very depraved and perverted tastes."

He waited for their coming out till his patience was exhausted; so he turned away, and leaving far behind him the abodes of man, he pursued his course, as chance directed him, through the open country.

Disappointed again in his hope of discovering what he had so long sought, he once more gave way to despair. "Alas!" said he, "it is very evident that happiness is not to be my lot. I am never to

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find, what, if I might once discover, I could instantly make mine. Cruel fairy! you have given me this box only to cheat me with hopes that are never to be realized, and to delude me with expectations that are never to be fulfilled. Of what use is the power of gratifying my wishes, if I know not what to wish; or of satisfying my desires, if, when satisfied, they do not yield me happiness? Take back thy useless gift, or instruct me how to make it of use."

As he finished these words, he was startled by the sound of his own name, repeated in a calm and dignified voice. He turned his head, and beheld a venerable old man leaning upon a staff, whose long white beard descended to his breast. His countenance was manly and sedate, his mien steady and composed, and

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his venerable aspect commanded attention.

"Osmond," said he, "askest thou where happiness is to be found, or despairest thou of obtaining it? Thou, the favourite of heaven, blest with youth and health, with the faculty of reason, the powers of mind and body in their full vigour, and all the comforts and conveniences of life at thy command! Is thy heart yet innocent of vice, thy conscience free from the burthen of guilt; and still inquirest thou where happiness is to be found? Then follow me."

So saying, he took Osmond by the hand, and led him down a steep and rugged path. The way was long, dangerous, and toilsome; but his guide still held him fast, and encouraged him to proceed.

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"My name," said he, as they went along, "is Experience; none ever applied to me for information, and failed to obtain it; and happy are those who meet with me ere it is too late for me to save them. Many have I snatched from the brink of ruin; many who have refused to listen to the dictates of my brother, Reason, have at last been forced to learn from Experience. If to these I am a hard master, and my instructions painful, it is their own needless obstinacy that is the cause. By thee, Osmond, I have an easier and a milder task to perform. To shew thee in what true happiness consists, while thou hast a life before thee to enjoy it, will be an office at once pleasing to myself, and profitable to thee."

As he finished these words, they

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reached a cave in the rock, the gloomy darkness of which almost forbade the foot of man to enter. Osmond involuntarily shrunk back, but his guide urged him on, and obliged him to enter. The first object they beheld was a female seated on the damp ground, holding an infant in her arms, whose piercing cries she in vain endeavoured to satisfy. Some older children, with scarcely a rag to cover them, and half famished for want of food, were clinging to her side, and with piteous accents demanding the food which the unfortunate mother was unable to give.

Osmond's heart bled at the sight, and he involuntarily felt for his purse;—how great was his disappointment to find it empty, and to recollect that he had parted with its last contents in payment

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for that day's refreshment. He was beginning to lament his inability to relieve her, when he suddenly recollected his box; he immediately touched the spring, and, to his great joy, his purse was full in an instant. He hastily poured the contents into the lap of the poor woman, and, followed by his guide, departed from the cave with sensations of delight and satisfaction which he had never before felt.

"Well, Osmond," said his companion, as they retraced their steps, "is happiness yet within thy power, or art thou still willing to resign thy *useless* gift?"

Osmond looked abashed, but he said nothing, for his heart was full. While his guide continued,

"Thou hast relieved, for the present, the pressing wants of this destitute fa-

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mily; but thou shalt do more than this, for more is in thy power; and hadst thou but used the power thou possessed in time, instead of living only to gratify thyself, they would never have been reduced to this painful extremity.

"This family was once prosperous and flourishing in the very city where thou residedst. The husband was enabled by an easy occupation to support his wife and children in comfort, and for a while they enjoyed the blessings of domestic peace. But their employer was a hard-hearted and unfeeling man, and his cruelty and extortion wrung from them their humble means of support. One distress succeeded to another, till the unhappy man, subdued in body and mind, was unable to bear up against it, or to meet the merciless demands of

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his creditors; he was dragged to a place of confinement, while his destitute family were turned out of their peaceful abode, and left to seek the shelter which this cave affords.

"Oh, how couldst thou riot in superfluous enjoyment, regardless of their wants, unheeding of their woes!"

As he finished this account, they reached the walls of the city, and traversed one or two streets till they stopped before a large and heavy looking building, with ponderous iron doors, and grated windows, that seemed intended for any other purpose than to admit light and air.

The appearance was so dismal, that Osmond, who had not been accustomed to the sight of distress, could hardly prevail upon himself to enter; but the thought

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of releasing the poor man from such miserable confinement encouraged him, and he hastily proceeded. They entered, and for the first time in his life Osmond found himself within the walls of a prison-house, and had a sight of the real misery and wretchedness of a dungeon. In tremulous haste, he again applied to his box, and by its means was enabled not only to release the poor man from his confinement, but to replace him in the station which he had before filled, and to restore him to his family and his cottage; and the delight with which they returned to their peaceful abode, could be equalled only by that which glowed in the heart of their benefactor.

Osmond at length having learnt from "Experience," that *Happiness consists in doing good to others, and not in*

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selfish indulgence, had just time before the expiration of the twelve moons to return to his father's house, and settle himself in a comfortable and decent, though not splendid establishment; where he spent the remainder of his life, employing his time, his wealth, his power, and all the other means which Providence afforded him, in promoting the comfort and prosperity of his fellow-creatures; and thus he secured to himself the love and esteem of all who knew him, and as large a portion of true happiness as this world is capable of bestowing.

"Oh, uncle," said Isabella, "what a nice story! I am glad poor Osmond was

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happy at last." "Yes," said Catharine, "how lucky it was he met with that old man before his twelve months were over!" "But do you understand," said Mrs. Percy, "who this old man was, and why he is called Experience?" "Yes, I think I do, mamma," said Isabella; "when Osmond gave the money to the poor woman, then he felt *real* happiness; and so he learnt from *Experience*, that doing good makes one happy." "Right, my love," said Col. M. "and the old man has taught you the same, I think; you have not been left to the chance of meeting with him, as poor Osmond was; your mother has led you to him from the first, has she not?" "Oh, yes, uncle, I see what you mean," said Catharine, "I am always more happy when I am doing any thing for any

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body else, than when I am only pleasing myself." "Yes, and there is another thing that is very odd," said Isabella; "the very thing that is most troublesome and disagreeable to one's-self, if it is for the good of any body else, only makes one the more happy." "Yes," said Col. M. "if Osmond had known that as well as you, he would not have been so surprised at the good clergyman leaving his beautiful house and garden, to visit the poor people, and to attend the children's school; nor at the young man's rising early to fag at the '*drudgery*' of the law, when his making so many people happy depended upon it. Much less would he have been so astonished at the young officer's joy in going to India, because in that case it was his own mother, and nearest relations, whom

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he was to benefit. He was only employing his health and strength and youthful vigour for her who had watched over his helpless infancy, and brought him up safe to manhood. Osmond's box was of use to him, not because it enabled him to gratify every selfish desire, but because it showed him that such gratification could not confer happiness, which, perhaps, he would never have known, or never have believed, if he had not made the trial; and this, I dare say, the good fairy knew when she gave it to him.

"Well, I think I should like to have such a box," said Edward, "for I would not wish only for good things to please *myself*, but I should be able to do such fine things, and make such handsome presents to other people! First, I would wish

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for a poney a-piece for John and me, and then a gold watch a-piece for all four of us; and then whenever mamma or *you*, uncle, wished for any thing, I could give it you; and then I would wish for a new cottage for old Davies, because the roof of his is all tumbling in: only think how nice it would be to have every thing one wished for in an instant!" "You would make a better use of your box than Osmond did, I have no doubt, my boy," said Col. Mordaunt; "but I question whether you would be happier with it than without it." "No?" said Edward, looking very much surprised. "Not happier?" said John. "No, my boys, for you would lose the principal ingredient of happiness, which Isabella has just mentioned. It is very pleasant to be able

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to give money, and make handsome presents; but there are much greater pleasures than these. When we do any good, or confer any benefit on others, by a sacrifice of our own comfort and convenience, we feel much more satisfaction than when we only give that which costs us nothing, and which we can easily spare. — Do not you think so, Edward?" Edward hesitated. "We must have the old man to come and teach it him, I think," said Col. M. "Oh! he has learnt it of him already, or I am much mistaken," said Mrs. Percy. "Edward," continued she, "can you recollect whether you felt most pleasure when you gave the five shillings as a Christmas-box to poor Dawson yesterday, or the other day when you staid out in the snow, while all the rest came in to din

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ner and a warm fire, only to help the poor widow Norris with her faggots, and to shew her the way home which she had lost?" "Oh, mamma," said Edward, "there is no comparison; I am sure I was very glad to give Dawson his five shillings, and very much obliged to you, uncle, for letting *me* give it to him; but I was much more pleased the time before." "And yet," said Mrs. Percy, "you gave no money, nor present of any kind, that day." "And you could have done what you did as well without your box as with it," said Col. M. "Oh, ay, I see you are right, uncle," said Edward.

"We may observe, my dear children," said Col. M. "how wisely it has been ordered by Providence, that in a world where want and misery abound, we

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should all depend for comfort on one another! And though we can none of us expect to be *perfectly* happy in this life; yet while we are relieving the wants, or soothing the sorrows, or administering in any way to the comfort of another, we are securing real happiness to ourselves, and by increasing our love and charity, are fitting our souls for the enjoyment of a happier and more perfect state. Thus has our wise and merciful Creator made the performance of this duty to bring its own reward both here and hereafter. Now I think it is late, and time to go to bed; to-morrow, we will go and pay old Davies a visit, and see what we can do for his tumbling roof, without the help of Osmond's "wonderful box."

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THE next evening, when they were all assembled, as usual, round their cheerful fireside, John began the conversation by telling his uncle that Edward had been called a "coward." "Indeed!" said Col. M. "that is a character I have a great contempt for, certainly; but as the appellation of *coward* is often undeservedly applied, perhaps it may be the case now." "Oh yes, that I am sure it is," said Isabella, "Edward is any thing but a coward." "I am sure I think him the bravest of boys," said Catharine. "Well, I only know," continued John, "he refused to lick little James Norton, who was behaving very impertinently to him, and the other boys asked him why he did not knock

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the little thing down? and they said it was very mean-spirited of him to stand still and let himself be treated in that way, when, if he had any *proper spirit*, he might with one blow have laid the little impudent rascal on the ground. And for all that Edward would not fight him. So they all began sneering at him, and called him a *coward*, and said he was afraid to fight. So they hissed at him and laughed at him so much, that I did not like it at all, and so I offered to fight him myself, for I thought, what with James Norton's impudence, and the boys' ridicule, poor Edward would have come ill off; and I looked in his face every minute expecting to see him cry."

"*Cry*, indeed!" said Edward, "I should have been a coward truly, if I

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could not have stood the boys' laughter, and the impudence of a little fellow no bigger than my thumb. But I hope, Johnny, you did not fight him?" "Yes, but I did though," answered John; "as soon as you were gone I gave it him most soundly, and sent him roaring to his mamma." "I am sorry for that, John," said Edward, "for both of us are older and stronger than little James, and therefore we should not fight him." "Why not?" said John. "Because," returned Edward, "as we should have the advantage, it would not be fair." "Oh, I don't care for that," said John, "the boys all said I did right, and that I had ten times more spirit and courage than you,—and so I dare say will uncle Mordaunt." "Not I, indeed," said Col. M., "I think that Edward has shown

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a great deal more real courage and spirit by choosing to bear the boys' laughter, and put up with the little one's impudence, rather than fight him, because he was younger and weaker than himself. I think that instead of being a coward, Edward has shown a very manly and generous spirit." "And so do I, indeed," said Mrs. Percy, "it is just what I should have expected from Edward; and I hope, John, you will follow his example another time, now that you see he was right in this instance." "But, mamma," said John, "I don't see that he *was* right; I don't see how it *can* be, because all the boys said *I* was right." "But cannot all the boys be mistaken?" said Col. M. "Yes; but then," stammered John, "but then — if I had followed Edward's example, they would all

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have laughed at *me*, and called *me* names." "Oh, what then you are afraid of the boys laughing at you, are you?" said Col. M., "I am afraid it is John that is the *coward*. Edward did not fear being laughed at, or being called names; he did what he thought right in spite of it all." "Well, uncle," said John, who began to feel hurt, "you know it is quite a different thing with Edward and me." "Yes," said Col. M., "I know there is a difference, because Edward is older than you, and I do not expect you will know so readily what is right, without being told: but I meant to show you that you were mistaken in thinking your brother a coward, and that, on the contrary, he has shown a manly spirit, and that true courage which can bear to be laughed at, or abused, without being turned aside

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from its duty. And now I shall expect you to do the same another time."—"But," said John, who still hesitated, "I know that Edward is older than I am, but, uncle, that is not the difference I meant. I said it was a different thing with him and me, because I am to be a soldier, you know, and go abroad with you, uncle; and so I must be ready to fight any body and every body now; and so I try to be like a soldier now, you know." "Oh, you are mistaken still, I see," said Col. M., "and think that to be a brave soldier you must fight any body and every body, do you? We must show you your mistake, and teach you what courage is, or you will be dubbed a coward, and soon be turned out of the regiment. A soldier once seen taking advantage of the weakness of an inferior enemy, his

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reputation is gone at once. I know one boy, indeed, who possesses real courage, and whom I should be proud of, as a soldier in my regiment: one did I say? I can tell you of two, who have given striking proofs of cool intrepidity and manly fortitude." "Perhaps," said John, swallowing his visible inclination to cry, "perhaps you will take one of them abroad with you, instead of me." "No, no, my boy," said his uncle, stroking his cheek, and patting him on the shoulder, "I will have my own John, and no one in his place. I will tell you the anecdotes of these two boys, and then I think you will understand what it is to be really brave and courageous, and when once you understand *rightly*, I know you will be as brave as the best of them: so sit down and hear my story."

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"FREDERICK HERBERT is one of a party of happy little boys, belonging to Dr. Napleton's school. I call them happy boys, for they really are so, even though they are at school. Dr. Napleton is kind and indulgent, and encourages them, when school-hours are over, in a variety of rational and healthful diversions. One of their favourite amusements at the time I visited my little friend Herbert, was playing at soldiers. The whole school used to form into a regiment, and perform their exercise. The day I called there the good Doctor took me into the field, behind his house, where I saw the soldiers drilled. I gave them a few hints, and taught them some of the manœuvres of an army; and they

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were glad enough to take this advantage of the visit of Herbert's friend, as they called me, for they knew but little of military discipline till I came amongst them. I am going to tell you how my boy Herbert signalized himself in this little army. It was not by running any one through the body, or by drawing his sword at every one who came near him; or even by bringing to the ground any little boy who happened to teaze and insult him: but I will tell you how it was.

"One day, when Dr. N. had given his boys a *whole* holiday, they determined to have a review and a sham-fight. Upon this occasion, it was little Herbert's part to guard the standard, which was fixed in the ground. This was a post of great importance, and proud enough he seemed

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to be of the honour. His little figure was almost hid by the streaming colours as they waved in the air; and all the time of the battle there he stood by the side of the standard, as firm and upright as a little post.

"Well, it happened rather unluckily for this well-ordered battle, that just as they were in the thickest part of it, a bull, who was grazing in a neighbouring meadow, frightened I suppose by the sound of the drum, and the noise of this tremendous army, came tearing into the field amongst them, throwing up his hind legs, and bellowing all the way he went. The soldiers all set off as fast as they could, leaving their arms and every thing behind them; some scampered one way and some another, but all made the best of their way towards the house,

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where the good Doctor, who was really alarmed, was in the greatest anxiety to see them all safe. In counting them over, however, poor Herbert was missing, and the servants were instantly sent to the field to look for him. They went directly to the scene of battle, and there they found the faithful, the intrepid soldier, standing by the side of his colours, fixed and immovable as if nothing had happened. They immediately called to him to make haste and escape from the scene of danger, but nothing would tempt him to move, till he heard the voice of his commanding officer, who now called to him from the window, and made him a signal to resign his trust."

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"And now, John," continued C[illegible]M., "was not my little friend truly brave? Could an experienced veteran show more *real* courage, more cool intrepidity, more attention to orders, more faithfulness in trust, more steadiness in the discharge of his duty?" "Oh, no," said John eagerly, "he was a brave boy indeed; and I am sure, uncle Mordaunt, I will try to imitate him, and I will never be a blusterer as long as I live, nor a coward either: and so I hope you will let me be a soldier in your regiment, and then, you know, perhaps I may do the same, or something like it. Perhaps when we get in foreign countries, we may be attacked by wild beasts still fiercer than bulls, may we not? I think you told us there were lions and tigers in some countries, and bears too, black

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bears and white bears, did you not, uncle?" said John. "Yes, I remember," said Catharine, "he was going to tell us an anecdote once of some white bears, only a gentleman came in and interrupted him that evening. I should like to hear that now, uncle, if you please," continued she. "But you forget all of you," said Edward, "that we have only had one of these anecdotes of bravery, and uncle Mordaunt said he could tell us of two brave boys." "Oh, ay," said John, "let us have the other hero's history; do, pray do, uncle, for I like to hear about brave people, particularly about brave boys, it makes me feel so *very* brave myself. Now, uncle, if you please," said John, seating himself again in readiness to listen. "Well then, uncle Mordaunt," said Catharine, "you

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will not forget to tell us about the white bears, some other time, will you?" "No, my good-humoured little girl," said Col. M. "I will take care you shall not lose by your readiness to give up your own wishes to that of your brother's; and now for my second hero!"

"WILLIAM was the son of a clergyman in Northamptonshire. At the time when he was eight or nine years old, his father was very ill, and the care of the family and the education of the children rested, for the time, entirely upon his mother, who was, fortunately, a woman of very superior understanding, and consequently well fitted for the task.

"It was in the month of November that he one day obtained leave of his father

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to go and pay a visit at his uncle's house, at a few miles distance. He had a donkey, of which he was very fond. The poor animal was a great favourite with all his brothers and sisters; and though they had often the pleasure of riding it by turns, yet it was never ill-used by any of them, but led a comfortable and happy life.

"Well, upon this donkey little William rode, when he went to visit his uncle: it was a fine autumnal day, and he had a delightful ride. The chief part of the road was cut through a wood, and William amused himself as he went along in watching the squirrels which were jumping about in the branches.

"When William arrived at his uncle's, he found a large party of boys and girls, besides his cousins, waiting his arrival;

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and the day passed so quickly, (as happy days are apt to do,) that it was much later than William was aware of, before he mounted his donkey again, and set off upon his return.

"His mother, who had been taken up by her attendance upon her husband all day, as soon as she saw the sun declining, began to look out for her little boy; and as he was not yet arrived, she put on her hat and shawl, and went out to meet him. She walked some little distance, but as she could not see him, she was obliged to return, as she feared her husband would miss her, and inquire into the cause of her unusual absence; and she could not bear to make him uneasy about William, because the least anxiety of mind would have endangered his life.

"It now grew darker and darker, and

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yet little William did not return; and his mother, who began to be alarmed lest some accident should have befallen him, sent off a servant on horseback to meet him, with orders that he should go on to her brother's house, unless he met little William on the road.

"She waited a tedious hour without any relief to her suspense, and at the end of that time the servant returned, and said that Master William had set off two hours ago, and ought to have been at home long before. This intelligence, of course, doubled the alarm of his mother, who now sent every servant out in search of him; and, at the same time that she felt herself almost distracted by apprehension, she still concealed it from her husband, and suffered the shutters to be shut and the candles to be brought in,

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as usual; but hour after hour passed, and he was not to be found.

"Bed-time arrived, and William's mother having seen every thing done that was in her power, to provide for his safety, resolutely determined, for fear of alarming her husband, to go to bed as usual, though she was herself much too unhappy to sleep for a moment.

"All this time poor William had lost his way in the wood. He knew the road very well by day-light; but the sun was setting when he left his uncle's, and by the time he got into the middle of the wood it was quite dark: and having taken a wrong turning, he soon found himself in a sort of wilderness, where, though he could just get on through the underwood with much difficulty, yet nothing like the right road could he find.

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He tried first going a little to the left, and then a little to the right, and then he got off and led his donkey backwards and forwards, still expecting to get back into the road; but instead of this, he only ran up against a great tree, or fell over an old stump of one, or tore his legs in the brambles. So at last he was obliged to give it up, and then he began to feel very much frightened. He was frightened for *himself* when he thought of staying alone all night in the wood; but he was not a *selfish* child, he did not think only of his *own* distress; the thoughts of his mother and his poor father came into his mind, and putting his hands before his face, he burst into tears.

"In a very little while, however, he recovered himself, and drying his eyes,

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determined to make another attempt to find his way on. This was quite as unsuccessful as before. After wandering about for a long time, he at last came to an open place in the wood: here he stopped, and tried to rally his spirits, by thinking of all the most entertaining things he had ever heard or read of. "Now," thought he, "if I was a wild man of the woods, I should live all my life in such a place as this: or if I was Robin Hood, I should take up my quarters here with Little John, and call to my 'merry-men all' to come and feast with me. But I have neither merry-men to call, nor feast to eat, and it begins to be very, very cold," said he, shuddering from head to foot, and feeling that these fanciful thoughts were not sufficient to entertain him now. "Perhaps I shall

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die before the night is over," thought he, as the wind whistled mournfully amongst the trees, and the dry leaves pattered down at his feet. "I shall die with cold, and my poor donkey, too, will be starved to death. My father and mother will never see me again; and perhaps they will never know what is become of poor William! And what *will* become of me, if I die?"

"This awful question, which seldom occurs in full force to so young a mind, carried his thoughts immediately to God, and he knelt down and said his prayers. William had often prayed before, but never with such sincerity and fervour as now. No human being ever addresses himself to God, in spirit and in truth, without finding comfort and support, let his situation be ever so forlorn and

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desolate; and William arose from his knees cheered and animated.

"As he raised his eyes towards heaven, he saw the twinkling stars, which now appeared in the sky, and as they shone through the dark branches of the trees, he recollected the pious instructions of his good father; and many of the lessons which his mother had taught him came into his mind, and brought support and comfort with them. He thought of the great and good God who is equally present every where, who "neither slumbers nor sleeps," and to whom "the night is as clear as the day." He repeated the lines he had learnt,

"My noon-day walks he shall attend,
"And all my midnight hours defend."

"While he was engaged in these comforting meditations, he heard a noise at

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a little distance; he listened, and thought it was only the wind that rustled amid the branches of the trees; but in another instant he heard the sound of a man's voice, and halloo! halloo! resounded from different parts of the wood. "Perhaps it is a robber," thought William; but the next instant he considered that a robber would not want to make himself heard; and as he was sure it was much more likely to be some of his father's servants sent out in search of him, he immediately hallooed in return as loud as he possibly could. But poor William had the disappointment of hearing the sound of the voices grow fainter and fainter, till at last they died away in the distance, and he could distinguish them no longer.

"As he now gave up all hope, and was

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almost worn out with fatigue and cold, he determined, with great presence of mind, upon the best plan for preserving his life. He took off the saddle from the poor donkey's back, (who was glad of the relief,) and immediately laid down upon the mossy ground, and repeating the words, "I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest," he stretched himself across the back of his poor donkey, hoping that the warmth of the animal would keep him alive, and in this situation the poor little fellow sunk into a sound and peaceful sleep.

"At the dawn of morning, the servants, who had been all night continuing their search, discovered the poor little boy. He was still sleeping in all the security of innocence. They gently raised him up, and wrapping him in a warm cloak,

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carried him with all speed to the arms of his happy mother."

"Oh how glad she must have been to see him!" said Isabella, (smiling through her tears). "And how glad William must have been to find himself safe at home again!" said Edward. "I dare say when he woke he thought it was all a dream; for I often dream of those sort of things—of getting somewhere where I cannot get back again, or falling in something, and not being able to get out again; and then when I wake, I am so glad to find it was only a dream." "Well, my man," said Col. M., "you must go to bed now, and dream as you can, for our two heroes have kept us be-

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yond the usual hour, and little John's eyes are twinkling like the stars that William saw in the sky. Good night, my girls and boys," said he:—and so kissing their mother, shaking hands with their uncle, and giving old Nelson a friendly pat on the back, they all went to bed, and dreamt wonderful dreams, no doubt; but whether of sleeping in a wood, or on a donkey's back, or any thing still more wonderful, we have never been able to ascertain.

"My dear uncle," said John, "I like the little story you told us last night, very much." "And so do I," said Edward. "Well, and I *like* it," said Catharine, "that is, it amuses me; but

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I do not think that Isabella and I *can* be as well pleased with it as you boys are." "Why not?" said John. "Oh, because it is all about bravery and courage, and those sort of things that girls have nothing to do with." "I am not *sure*," said Col. Mordaunt, "that bravery and courage are virtues with which girls have nothing to do." "Why," said Catharine laughing, "you would not have us soldiers or sailors, would you?" "Certainly not," said her uncle. "Well, and it is not very likely that we should go out upon donkeys, or ponies either, by ourselves, you know: so I do not see why we should wish to have courage enough to stay by ourselves all night in a wood. For my part, I always like to fancy myself in the place of the person you are telling me a story about; and

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I like to think whether I should have done the same, or felt the same, or said the same: now, you know, when you tell me such stories as these, I cannot do this, so now you know what I mean, uncle. You know ——" "Stay," said Col. Mordaunt, interrupting her, "I do not yet allow your first statement to be correct. I think I can tell you a story which will prove to you, that courage and bravery do not belong only to boys and men." "Oh, I can guess, I can guess," said Catharine quickly, "what you are going to tell me. Joan of Arc and the wonderful sword: yes, yes, she was brave enough, to be sure. But I am certain neither Isabella nor I shall ever be like Joan of Arc; we shall never ride on horseback into a town, at the head of an army." "I hope not, my

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dear," said Col. M., "and I can further assure you, that my story has nothing to do with Joan of Arc." "Oh, well then, you mean the Countess de Montfort, or Queen Elizabeth perhaps, or —" "You are wrong," said Edward; "I see by my uncle's face you are wrong." "Suppose, Catharine," said Isabella, instead of guessing any more, you were to sit down quietly, and let uncle Mordaunt speak for himself." "Why yes, that would be the wisest way, after all," said Catharine, seating herself at his feet: "now, uncle, if you will begin, I will not speak another word."

"My dear girl," said the Colonel, "I am about to relate to you a little anecdote—it does not deserve the name of a story; but it is quite *true*." "Queen Boadicea," said Catharine, whose head

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still ran upon warlike heroines. "I wish you would not interrupt my uncle so often, Catharine," said John.

"WHEN I was travelling through Cumberland," continued Col. Mordaunt, "I spent a few days with a gentleman whom I have always been proud to rank amongst the number of my most intimate friends. He lives upon his country estate, in all the easy elegance, rational enjoyment, and liberal hospitality, which, in these days, describe the character of an English gentleman. His wife is a woman of very superior attainments; and his children, three boys and two girls, are possessed of all those simple virtues, and natural graces, that are

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in youth the most bewitching. They have fine dispositions and considerable talents; and though these advantages have been drawn forth and cultivated by the most judicious mode of education, yet no display is made of any acquirements, and my friend's children are never obtruded upon the notice of his guests, nor do they ever put themselves forward in any unbecoming manner. In short, said Col. Mordaunt, though I have no doubt they have faults, as all children have, I must own, I never discovered any in these children; and as I never visited them without the liveliest pleasure, so I never parted from them without the sincerest regret."

"Uncle," said Catharine, looking up in his face, while the tears started into

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her eyes, "perhaps you love them better than your *own* children?—your own nieces and nephews, I mean. Perhaps they never interrupt you when you are going to tell a story, with their foolish guesses and questions?" "My own dear little girl," said Col. M., lifting her up upon his knee, and kissing away the tear from her rosy cheek; "never can I love any thing so well as my own children. But you shall love these little friends of mine some day or other. The eldest of the girls, I think, would be your favourite. In looks she is like a little fairy. The old nurse used to say she looked as if a breath would blow her. This extreme delicacy arose from the nature of her constitution, and not from any improper degree of fostering care."

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"The last time I visited my friend, I found the family in anxiety and affliction. This poor dear child was suffering under a disease, which besides occasioning constant pain and uneasiness, threatened to destroy her life. The disease was a sort of tumour or swelling in the throat, which grew by degrees larger and larger, till at length it was with great difficulty she could either speak or breathe. The medical man who attended the family, requested that a consultation of physicians might decide upon what was to be done. My friend therefore immediately determined to carry his suffering child to London; and I requested to accompany them on their anxious journey.

"I shall never forget the morning of our departure. I really believe that every servant in the house participated in some

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degree in the anxious feelings of the parents. The children wept at parting with their sister for a few days only.

"Every effort, however, was made by this noble-minded girl to conceal her sufferings, and to appear before her parents full of hope and cheerfulness. She talked of the pleasure of going to London, though it was for such a purpose as could leave no room for any such idea.

"Nothing could exceed the gentle patience with which our invalid sustained the fatigue of the journey, and the increase of pain occasioned by it. All her anxiety seemed to be for her father.

"As soon as possible after our arrival in town, the different surgeons who were to consult upon her case arrived. My poor child sat quietly in her arm-chair, smiling, and assuring her father she

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was "better than usual to-day;" while he walked about the room, pale with agitation, and watched the different chariots as they stopped one after another at the door of the house. When the physicians were all arrived, he went down stairs to them, to give them an account of the rise and progress of the disease; and during this short interval, I said all I could to encourage the spirits of the little sufferer. In spite of my philosophy, however, I allow, my own heart failed me when I heard the creaking shoes of these assembled gentlemen, as they came up stairs to pronounce the sentence of life or death upon this interesting being. After examination of the part affected, every hope of complete restoration was held out. "Yes, indeed, sir," said Mr. D., "we all agree

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that the young lady may be entirely cured; we will venture to ensure her recovery, provided she submit immediately to an operation that will be attended with some pain, but very little danger." "What operation do you mean, sir?" said Letitia. "Oh, my little woman," said the man, with a significant sort of nod, which shewed he considered her only as a weak-minded child, "only a little sort of an operation by which we get rid of these troublesome enemies." "But I think," said Mr. G., who had been intently watching her countenance, "she would rather know more particularly what it is we purpose to do—and that the cure for her complaint is to open her throat with a lancet, and to remove the tumour or swelling." "Thank you, sir," said Le-

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titia, with an expressive and grateful look. "Must it be done directly, papa?" "Oh dear no, my little queen," said Mr. D., patting her head in an encouraging manner, "not to-day, not to-day. We must have a little rest after our journey, and a little sleep and refreshment, and many other pleasant little indulgencies which papa will procure for us before we begin." "When do you advise then," said I, rather impatiently, "that it should be done, sir?" The surgeons then consulted with one another when the operation should be performed; and in this interval Letitia requested her father's leave to go up stairs and take some rest, and having obtained it, she stole out of the room as quickly as possible.

"The surgeons decided upon twelve

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o'clock the next day. The two operators were to be Mr. D. and Mr. G., the gentleman who had spoken so kindly, and described the nature of the operation with so much kind feeling in his manner. The rest of that day passed heavily with my poor friend; and in the morning, when we met at breakfast, he looked so ill from the effect of a sleepless and anxious night, that I asked him to walk with me, thinking that the air would refresh him, and render him better able to support the trial that awaited him. His daughter seemed delighted at the idea, and immediately suggested some wish of her own, some little purchase to be made for her, which became at once to him a pleasure and a pursuit. Before we set out she took an opportunity of whispering to me, saying, "I

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have a great favour to beg of you, will you persuade papa to stay out till the hour is come? it will do him so much more good to be out with you, than to be watching my pale face till the time comes; so do not, *pray* do not let him come home till twelve." "Depend upon it, my dear child," said I, he shall not; "but in the mean time, my little girl, will not you be dull alone, and without amusement? "Oh no," said she smiling, "now you have made me this promise, I shall not have a wish in the world; at least only one, said she, colouring and hesitating, and that *you* can grant me." I hastened to assure her of my readiness to gratify any wish of her's. She then placed in my hands a little packet, desiring me to take charge of it, but not to open it till the

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next day. I afterwards discovered that this parcel contained a little packet and a little note for every individual of her family, and that she intended me to distribute them in case she died under the operation.

"I found it no easy matter to keep my promise, as my poor friend during our walk was constantly taking out his watch, and fearing we should stay out beyond the appointed hour. I contrived, however, to take a little circuit on our return, which brought us to the house only a few minutes before twelve. To his great dismay he saw the two chariots standing at the door: "We are too late after all," said he, as he rushed into the house. Before he could get quite up the stairs, the young surgeon met him, and taking both his hands,

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with tears in his eyes and an agitated voice, "My dear sir," said he, "the operation is over, happily over. Your excellent child has supported herself most nobly, and we have succeeded beyond our expectation; we have no doubt her recovery will be speedy and complete."

"My friend seemed hardly to possess his senses, while he listened to these words, and would have still passed on to the room where he expected to find his child, but the surgeon stopped him, saying, "Stay, dear sir; at the present moment there would be danger in the pleasure and agitation your appearance would create. In a few minutes more she will be recovered from the effects of the violent pain she has endured." "My little angel!" said her father,

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"what a cruel wretch must you think me for being absent at such a time!" "My dear sir," said the surgeon, "I beseech you to be calm, and do not for a moment suppose you have any thing to reproach yourself with. All this has not happened by accident, or by any neglect on your part, but by a settled plan of your daughter's, contrived with the affectionate wish of sparing your feelings, and carried on with all the magnanimity of a heroine." "How, how was it contrived?" said her father. "The young lady, sir, when she left the room yesterday, after our consultation, waited in the passage and stopped us as we passed. She addressed herself more particularly to me, and asked me at what hour on the morrow we were to meet; I told her, at twelve precisely. She then asked me

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how long it would take to perform the operation. And when I told her rather less than one hour, she said, 'then pray, gentlemen, if you can, come one hour earlier; pray, pray do,' said she, seeing us hesitate, and explaining the motive of her request. Mr. D. was fearful that however kindly she might intend to act, or however courageous she might now feel, yet when it came to the point, she would require the presence, and also the authority of a parent to ensure her entire submission to the necessary measures. But I was sure he was mistaken, and answered for her good conduct; and, in truth, the event has more than justified my predictions. We found the poor child ready waiting for us, and seeming to fear nothing so much as any delay in our proceedings. She expected that we

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should place her in an armed-chair, and had put one by the window for the purpose; but we were obliged to tell her, that it was necessary she should be laid upon a table and bound down, for fear of the least motion of her head, which would be dangerous. She looked to me, and gently said, 'I think I can sit quite still, and promise not to move, if that will do.' I told her it was impossible; and immediately, with entire confidence, and with the gentleness of a lamb, she laid herself down upon the table. Never, I will venture to say, was an operation sustained with more patience and resolution, and our complete success is in a great measure to be attributed to this circumstance."

"Thank God! thank God!" said the delighted father; "and may he bless

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and reward you, sir, for the blessed deed you have performed."

"I should try in vain, my dear children," said Col. Mordaunt, wiping off the tears which filled his eyes, "to describe to you the happiness of both father and daughter, when they were allowed to meet. It must have been on her part of the purest nature of which a human being is susceptible, because it was earned by previous exertion, suffering, and self-denial. To both the joy was indescribable; it was joy too great for utterance!—silent!—unspeakable.

"Not so the burst of happiness that awaited our return to the family mansion, whither, in a fortnight's time, we carried our beloved treasure, entirely restored to her usual health. Joy, upon this occasion, beamed from the counte-

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nance of Letitia, and shone in the tearful eyes of her mother, and uttered screams of delight from the mouths of her children, and welcomes and congratulations without end from the servants, and from many of the peasants who followed the carriage through the village.

"I staid one whole day after our arrival, to witness the complete restoration of my friend's domestic peace; and then left him, rejoicing in his possession of so much happiness, and praying for a continuance of it on earth, and a renewal of it in its most perfect form in heaven!"

"Oh dear, uncle," said Catharine, when he had ended, "that is a story after my own heart! Letitia is a girl, and just about my age, and I can try to

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imitate her!" "And is it really true?" said Isabella, "and shall we ever see this dear good girl? how I shall love her when I know her." "Yes, you will love her indeed, my dear girls," said Col. M., "I shall take the first opportunity of bringing you together. They seldom leave their country seat, as they live so far from town, and with a young and growing family, such long journeys would be troublesome and expensive: but you must know her as well as you can, by my account, as she already knows something of *you* by the same means. I always talk to them of my dear nephews and nieces at Percy Hall."

"I am afraid," said Mrs. Percy to her brother, "such instances of fortitude and courage in females are very rare in these days; most girls are taught

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to think sensibility (as it is falsely called) and feminine timidity to be infinitely more engaging, by which they grow up in the indulgence of every foolish fear, and, shrinking from every thing that can possibly hurt either their nerves or feelings, are unfitted to act their part in life, and become equally contemptible and unhappy. It was lucky for your little friend that she was bred up with other notions." "Yes, my dear sister," said Col. M.; "and this brings to my recollection another instance of female heroism which I became acquainted with in my travels through Switzerland; and in which nature, unassisted and unperverted nature, prompted an action as admirable and praiseworthy as the one I have related." "Oh do tell it us," said Mrs. Percy; and

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"Do tell it us," echoed all the children. "I am afraid," said Col. M., "it is too late this evening for any more stories. It is past nine o'clock, I declare," said he, taking out his watch, "and my little aide-de-camp is but half awake. Good night, my dear children; to-morrow I will carry you into the picturesque and mountainous country of Switzerland."

The next evening the children did not forget to ask their kind uncle for the Swiss story he had promised them; indeed they had waited for the usual hour with too much impatience to let it pass without having their curiosity satisfied. "It is only an anecdote of humble life," said Col. M., "but in

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the 'short and simple annals of the poor,' we often meet with virtues and sentiments that would do credit to a higher station; and the humble and uneducated Annot is not unworthy to be classed with our favourite Letitia."

HISTORY OF ANNOT.

In Switzerland, though there are high and barren mountains, the tops of which are covered with snow, yet the valleys between these mountains are rich and luxuriant as a fine and cultivated garden: the fields of waving corn, the vineyards and woods, with the little hamlets interspersed, form a striking contrast to the blackness of those dreary mountains.

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The hamlet in which Bernard and his family had lived, was situated in one of these beautiful valleys; and the cottage in which Annot was born, was as picturesque in appearance, and as full of comforts, as the Swiss cottages generally are. The lattice windows were beautifully hung with vines and roses, the little territory surrounding the house was in the highest state of cultivation, and every part of the domain seemed sunshine, prosperity, and peace.

A few days only had been necessary to change the scene, at the time that Annot was about twelve years old. Her father, a high-spirited and sturdy Swiss peasant, lost his life by one of those accidents to which the strong and healthy are as liable as those who are nearest to the grave. His poor widow had now

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to support herself and her family by the work of her own hands alone; it was necessary therefore to leave this happy home, and to seek the meanest shelter for herself and her children.

On the borders of a dreary forest, and at the foot of one of these snow-topped mountains, there stood the remains of an old chateau, and near it a lonely cottage which had not been inhabited for many years. It was said, that while the mansion which had now fallen to decay was resided in by the noble family to whom it belonged, there had been many little cottages in the neighbourhood inhabited by those who lived dependently upon their bounty; but when the chateau was left empty, their habitations were by degrees deserted; some were pulled down, and others left

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to decay, as nobody could venture to live so near the great forest, which was said to be infested with robbers; and indeed the distance from any town made it a most inconvenient situation, as none of the necessaries of life could be procured without a walk tedious, dangerous, and difficult: thus, by degrees, the hamlet disappeared.

There remained, however, this one cottage, which was still habitable, though forlorn and comfortless. The old steward of the family had lived in it, from attachment to the spot, long after every one else had departed; and in leaving it to his son, together with the earnings of a long life of service, had made it a condition, that the old house should be kept as long as possible from falling to decay. It was with much satisfaction

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that this son, despairing of any other tenant, offered this wretched dwelling to the widow and her children; and it was by her accepted with cheerfulness and gratitude.

Annot was about to weep as they passed, for the last time, through the little garden-gate, and began their melancholy walk; but she looked at her mother, and thought to herself, what must *she* feel? Is it for *me* to cry? Thus making a desperate effort to smother all selfish feeling, this noble-hearted child supported her spirits, and followed her mother with cheerful steps along a road which led them from a beloved and happy home to the dreary and desolate abode we have just described.

Cheerful industry can do much towards changing the face of the most desolate

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habitation. It was not long before the united efforts of the poor woman and her daughter Annot, produced an air of cleanliness and neatness, both in the cottage and its little garden, which it was thought money alone could have done. This good mother never allowed her children to compare the evils of their present lot with the comforts of times past: but if ever a comparison was drawn, it was to be with those whose fate was still harder than their own. "How happy! how thankful! ought we to be," she would say, "that a quiet and peaceful shelter is allowed to us, whilst many of our fellow-creatures are wandering over the world without food or shelter: and when I think of you, my dear little ones, and of the helpless, friendless state in which you *might* have been left, I

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cannot be too grateful that I am still spared to you; and for the blessing of health, which is still granted to me."

Genuine piety, instilled by example as well as precept, seldom fails to make its way to the heart; and in the minds of these children it produced the happiest effects, especially in that of Annot, who had soon need of all the magnanimity that sound principles and a good conscience could give her.

It happened one evening that Annot, who had been out with her sister to collect firing, returned later than usual; and as they opened the door of the cottage, they beheld their mother stretched upon her bed apparently lifeless. "Oh! mother, mother, what is the matter?" cried the children, running up to the bedside, "speak, speak to us, mother,"

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said Annot, in an agony of terror; but the poor woman was unable to reply. The exertions she had lately made had been too great for her strength; she had broke a blood-vessel, and was exhausted with the loss of blood: after a few moments, however, she sighed and opened her eyes;—her children were weeping over her.

"My poor babes," said she, "Oh what will become of you when I am gone?" "Gone!" cried Annot, "it cannot, cannot be." "Alas! my poor girl, the same misfortune happened to me once before, but then your poor father was with me, and the good doctor was within our reach, and my life was saved; but he then said—that if the blood-vessel, for so he called it, broke again, my chance would be but small; and it has

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so happened—it has so pleased God—and here there is no help at hand; but do not cry, dearest! he who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, will protect my children." "Mother," said Annot, interrupting her, and speaking very quickly, "what was that you said—no help? Where then does the doctor live who saved your life before?" "At ——, near the village, my child, that we have left," said the poor woman, with an involuntary sigh; "do not let us talk of him, but let me, while I can, advise you where to turn when I am ——" "Mother," said Annot, drying her eyes, and speaking almost in a tone of authority, "do not speak at all. God is too good, too merciful, I know he is; he will not take you from us: rest yourself, dear mother; for the love of your poor

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children, be at peace; take but a little rest, and all will yet be well."

"I will take rest, my child; and God in his mercy will, I doubt not, lay me down in peace, but not to wake again in this world." "Hush! hush! not another word," said Annot, softly placing her mother's head upon the pillow. "Jacqueline, you shall watch beside her, while I prepare something that will do her good."

With these words Annot closed the curtains carefully, making a sign at the same time to her little sister, that she wanted to speak to her. "Jacqueline dear," said she, in the softest whisper, "you will stay by her bedside and watch her till I come back again." "Come back again, Annot!" said Jacqueline, with a stare of surprise, "why where

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are you going?" "Only a little way," said Annot, reaching down her straw hat and wrapping-cloak. "Oh! Annot, Annot, where can you be going, when mother is dying?" said Jacqueline, beginning to weep afresh. "Where should I go," said Annot, "but to that place where help is to be found!" "What, Annot, you cannot mean to—" "Hush," said Annot, "for the whole world I would not that my mother should hear you." "But the forest, the gloomy forest," repeated Jacqueline, with a look of terror; "oh! Annot, Annot, you will never return—mother will die before you return." "God forbid!" said Annot solemnly: "go, Jacqueline, pray for her, pray for me, and all will yet be well."

Annot, with these words, laid her hand resolutely on the cottage-door, and

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venturing only one glance towards her mother's bed, allowed herself not a moment longer for deliberation, but with desperate courage set forth.

The way she had to pass, was one which no person in the neighbourhood, of any age, would have attempted, except in open day, and even then, such was the gloomy terror which prevailed of the forest through which the path-way was cut, that it was seldom passed through by any solitary traveller; and every peasant contrived to secure to himself a companion, before he ventured through its gloomy shades.

When Annot left her cottage the sun was only beginning to decline; and in sinking behind the tops of the mountains, it threw a golden light on the fields and woods, and hamlets, and every object in

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the valley. As she contemplated the splendid scene, poor Annot thought of the great and good God who gave the sun its light and lustre; and as she felt sure that he was looking down upon her, and that he would protect her, she lost all fear for herself. The hope that her mother would not die, but that she should be the means of saving her life, grew stronger every moment in her mind, and she walked forwards as speedily as possible.

In Switzerland, as there is little of that light which we call twilight, the shades of night succeed almost suddenly to the splendour of the declining sun: by the time, therefore, that this child reached the entrance of the forest, the cheering light that had conducted her to it was gone; but the pious thoughts that

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had supported her remained; and though the tall dark trees waved in gloomy silence before her, she hesitated not, but having discovered the path-way, by the help of the small lamp she held in her hand, she entered the dismal forest.

Poor little child! fearless from conscious innocence, and safe under the protection of heaven, pursue thy way in peace: the road through life is dark and dreary, and none shall pass it safely but those who, like thee, commit themselves to the guidance of God, and place all their hopes on his mercy.

The physician who had on a former occasion succeeded in restoring poor Annot's mother to life, was not only a man of skill and science, but he was humane and benevolent. It so happened, that on the very evening on which this acci-

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dent occurred, that he returned later than usual to his family; and this circumstance added to the satisfaction with which they always greeted his arrival.

A physician, whose duty leads him through the day from one scene of sorrow and suffering to another, and who is so intimately acquainted with all the sad variety of ills that wait on human life, on returning in the evening to a peaceful and happy home, where rosy health and cheerful goodness animate the countenances of all who are dear to him, must feel most forcibly the happiness he is permitted to enjoy; and it was a sentiment of pious gratitude, that drew tears into the eyes of this good man, as he looked round upon the group of smiling faces with which his table was surrounded.

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As soon as the children had received their father's blessing, and were dismissed to bed, the good doctor began as usual to acquaint his wife with the success of his labours.

"The good old lady at the chateau, my dear," said he, "is a little better, and last night slept for a whole hour together; the poor gentleman is sensibly worse, and I am afraid must die. Nothing can save the child who is ill with the fever, and its mother now has caught the infection. The boy who fell from the ladder will probably do well, if he submits to have his arm cut off; but my poor patients, those two unfortunate sisters, who I told you were so attached to each other, being left alone in the world, must, alas! be separated; the eldest now has every symptom of a de-

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cline, and I have lost all hope of her recovery. In one instance, however, my dear," continued he, "I thank God, my endeavours have been crowned with success; the young heir to the great estate near Lucerne, is entirely restored from the alarming seizure; and the happy parents, who know not how to give me sufficient proof of their gratitude and liberality, have offered to me a pretty little cottage, in a neighbouring hamlet, which, as it is surrounded by a little garden in a high state of cultivation, they think will be useful to me as a summer residence for my wife and children."

"It will be delightful for us, my dear," said his wife; "shall you accept this offer?" "I know that it was made me in sincerity of heart," he replied, "and I shall, therefore, accept it. The

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cottage has been left empty since the death of the last tenant, of the name of Bernard, upon whose wife I remember I once attended in a dangerous illness."

"And what became of the widow and her children?" "That I do not yet know," replied the doctor; "but if I can I will find out, for they were well worthy of assistance and attention, and I should think must be in great distress: let us, therefore, my dear," said he, "make it our care to-morrow, to seek out the present abode of these unfortunates; and, thankful for the blessings which are heaped upon us, endeavour in our turn to distribute from our abundance."

Such was the frame of mind in which this good man retired to rest; little knowing how soon that rest was to be

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broken, and those feelings called into action.

All was still, and every eye was closed in sleep, when poor Annot, breathless and faint, and almost dead with fatigue and anxiety, reached the door of the physician's house.

Till this moment she had considered only the difficulty of reaching the house; it had never occurred to her that there was any doubt that the physician would be ready to attend to her request; but she now recollected that she had no right to disturb the house, and stood rooted to the ground with a feeling of despair, when she considered that she had nothing to offer as a compensation for the services she was about to solicit. In an instant, however, she lost even

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this feeling, in the enthusiasm of childhood.

"When he knows how very ill my poor mother is," said she to herself, "I know he will come to her;" and she immediately knocked at the door with all the little strength she could muster.

Surely it was a kind Providence that had prepared the heart of this good man to listen to poor Annot's simple tale, that penetrated him with astonishment and admiration at her heroic conduct, and determined him, in spite of the late hour of the night, his wife's apprehensions, and his own fatigue, to repair without loss of time, to the widow's cottage.

Seated by the side of the good doctor, in his comfortable and useful, though not very splendid travelling equipage,

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the poor little girl was soon conveyed in safety to the cottage-door.

"Your mother," said he, "as he held the hand of the poor woman, and felt her pulse, whilst Annot listened as if afraid to breathe, "your mother will live, my dear child, and it is you who will have saved her life; for a few hours more and all hope of recovery would have been at an end."

On hearing these delightful words, Annot and her little sister, with all the ardour of genuine piety, raised their hands and eyes with pious thankfulness to heaven, and by this simple action proved that their hopes were, in reality, rested there.

Their kind-hearted friend, the physician, deeply penetrated with the scene before him, exerted himself to the ut-

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most in behalf of this interesting family; and by his benevolent and tender care, the poor woman was soon restored to her former health.

"There remains but one thing more to be done," said the good doctor, "to complete your recovery; change of air and scene, for a fortnight's time, I consider absolutely necessary, and I therefore desire, that you and your two girls will be ready to set out to-morrow, when I shall call to convey you to a lodging which I have prepared for the purpose.

The hour was fixed; the doctor was punctual to his appointment; and the happy mother, full of gratitude, was ready to accompany him.

It was a fine summer's day, and the country was in its highest state of beauty. To the poor invalid, who had been shut

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up so long within the walls of her miserable dwelling, it seemed like a new world of delight!

"The common air, the earth and skies,
"To her were opening Paradise."

But how shall we describe her feelings, or those of the delighted Annot, when having passed over that part of the road which led through the forest, the carriage soon after stopped—not at the lodging she had expected, but at the little garden-gate of their own deserted little mansion!

The sun was shining upon the lattice windows, the vines were hanging in clusters round them, the flowers were blowing, and the birds were singing just as they used to do. "Oh," said Annot, bursting into tears, "this is only a

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dream, I am sure it is only a dream, but I wish I could never wake!"

"No, my excellent child," said the doctor, "it is no dream; it is only the reward of your filial piety—your noble and courageous conduct. It was by these that I became acquainted with the story of your mother's sufferings; and having witnessed the genuine piety and simple goodness of her children, I am convinced that I am doing myself a service, in requesting them to become my tenants, and to inhabit once more the cottage of which I am now the possessor."

"Catharine, my dear," said Col. Mordaunt, when they were all sitting together the next evening, "I have not

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forgotten my promise, and this is the best day we could have had for your story of the white bears. The appearance without doors is better calculated to give you an idea of the country where they are found, than the fine clear frost with sunshine which we had yesterday, or the mild and drizzling rain of the day before." "What! all ice and snow?" said Catharine. "Yes," replied her uncle; and you must observe that what *we* have for a few days only in the course of the year, the poor Laplanders have all the year round—snow that never melts, and ice that never thaws." "Oh, the poor unfortunate people!" said Catharine. "Well now," said Edward, "I think I should like that. I should have such plenty of sliding and skating, and such lots of snow-balls: whereas here, just as

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I begin to enjoy myself, and sometimes when I have only had one or two days' skaiting, which you know, uncle, (that is, if you understand the subject, you know) is only just enough to get me into practice; and I go to bed full of the thoughts of a *thorough batch* to-morrow, there comes a stupid thaw in the night, and I wake in the morning only to see the waters flowing, and my skates of no use. And then, perhaps, when John and I have been all day hard at work to make a prodigious snow-ball, this same tiresome thaw comes, while we are asleep, and destroys all our labour at once." "Great misfortunes, indeed," said Col. M., "but are skaiting and snow-balls your only amusements? Have you nothing to do in the garden in spring-time, or in the fields in

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summer? Poor boy! so you sit moping all that time, waiting for the frost and snow, while others are riding ponies or donkies, or gardening, or making hay, or perhaps catching fish out of the *flowing waters*, and other such entertaining employments."

"Oh no, uncle, to be sure, I forgot all that, when I said I should like to live in Greenland. No; now I think of it, I would not give up those for the world. And besides all that, my birds and my rabbits, I suppose, would not live in such a cold country; and then my radishes and mustard and cress, which come up early in March—oh no! I see it would not do. And besides, although I am very curious to see these white bears, and to hear about them, I don't think I should enjoy *living* amongst

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them much. But now, do tell poor Catharine her story, uncle; I will not prevent you any longer," said he, "for I want to hear all about these white bears, quite as much as she does." "So now let us have your story, uncle," said they all, drawing in their chairs close up to him; and with ready pleasure their good uncle began the following anecdote.

FONDNESS OF BEARS FOR THEIR YOUNG.

"THE brown bears that we sometimes see dancing in the streets to the sound of a tabor and pipe, are not the only sort of bears. In some cold countries, where the sun never shines, there are

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white bears. They live in caverns of ice; and when the seas are frozen all over, these white bears come out from their caverns in search of food.

"Once it happened, that a ship which had been sent out on an expedition to the North Pole, was locked up in the ice; that is, the water in which the ship was sailing became frozen all round, so that the ship could not move. Not a very pleasant situation for the men who were in the ship;—however, there was no help for it: so they had nothing to do but to make the best of it, and keep themselves as warm and snug as they could, till the ice gave way, and let them out again from their cold prison. In the mean time, you may suppose that they watched very anxiously for this.

"Well, very early one morning, the

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man who was watching at the mast-head, called out to his companions that he saw three white bears, making their way as fast as they could across the frozen sea, and coming up to the ship. The sailors had caught a sea-horse, and were burning the fat of it for oil; and the strong smell which this made, enticed the bears towards the ship.

"As they came nearer and nearer, the men found that it was a great she-bear and her two cubs; but the cubs were nearly as large as the dam. They all three ran eagerly up towards the place where the fire was; and scratched out of the flames the flesh of the horse, which was not yet burnt, and ate it most greedily. The men on board, who were much amused by watching them, threw out of the vessel great lumps of the flesh of the

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horse, which was still in the ship. The old bear was nearest, and was the first to catch them; but she carried them untouched, and laid them at the feet of the cubs, and divided them fairly before she began to eat herself.

"Perhaps you think it was very good-natured of the men in the ship to feed the bears; but I am afraid they could only have done it for sport; for just as the poor old bear was carrying away the last piece of flesh, they took up their guns, and aiming them at the bears, they wounded the dam, and shot the two young cubs dead!

"The poor old bear, though in dreadful agony from the wounds she had received, contrived to crawl along with the piece of flesh she was carrying, till she reached her dying cubs. And I do

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think it would have drawn tears of pity from your eyes, if you could have seen the affectionate sorrow with which she pined over her expiring young ones. She tore in pieces the flesh she had brought them; she tried to coax them to eat; and when she found they could not, she laid her paws first upon one and then upon the other, and then tried and tried, but all in vain, to raise them up; moaning all the while most piteously. She then went off to a little distance, and turned back and moaned again, hoping to entice them to follow. But when she saw they did not stir, she returned to them again, and walked round and round them, licking their wounds and fondly stroking them. She then grew very weak and faint herself: however she crawled away as before for a few

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paces, and then looked behind her again, and stood for some time moaning, and making signs for them to follow her. But the poor cubs still lying upon the ice, she returned to them once more; and, with every sign of affection, again pawed, and stroked, and caressed them. It was all in vain, however; and finding that they were cold and lifeless, she raised her head towards the ship, and fixing her eyes upon the murderers, uttered a growl of despair.

"The sailors took up their guns again, and fired a ball at her in return: and the poor bear fell down between her cubs, and died licking their wounds."

"Dear me!" said Isabella, "how wonderful that a *bear* should be so

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tender-hearted, and fond of her young!" "Yes, I think it is very odd that a brute beast should have so much affection for any thing," said Edward. "And least of all should I have expected it from such a brute as a *bear*," said Catharine, "which I had always fancied was such a rough, stupid, senseless animal!" "You see then, my little girl," said Col. M., "you must not judge of qualities by outward appearance: this rough and senseless animal, you see, possesses maternal affection as strong, as tender, and as self-denying, as that of the best mother of human kind. The same tender love which prompted her (hungry as she was) to supply the wants of her cubs, before she touched a mouthful herself, made her forget the pain of her own wounds, while she vainly endeavoured

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to re-animate their senseless bodies; and even in the agonies of death, made her think only of her children, for she actually died licking their wounds!"

"It is indeed wonderful," said Mrs. Percy, "how far maternal affection is carried, even in the brute creation. No one who has not felt it, can imagine the love a parent bears towards her offspring."

"I can fancy it in *human* mothers," said Isabella; "when I saw mamma's anxiety when Catharine was ill last winter, and how she neglected her own comfort to take care of her, and went without her dinner sometimes because she was so busy nursing her; and how she sat up by her side, instead of going to bed herself. I thought to myself, that I would imitate her, and do the same

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when any one I loved very dearly was ill, or when I had children of my own: but what I cannot understand is, how animals who have not the power of reason can learn the same?"

"My dear girl," said Col. M., "they do not learn it by *reasoning*, or by any other means: it is an instinct which Providence has given them for the preservation of their young little cubs; and almost every other sort of animal, when first born, are tender and helpless, and unable to provide for their own safety, or to supply their own wants. Were it not then for this instinct in the mothers, they would soon perish for want of assistance and support. There are many other virtues which are displayed in animals, by instinct, for the example, and sometimes to the shame, of our wise-

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headed reasoners; as Cowper truly says,

"Reas'ning at every step he treads,
Man oft mistakes his way;
While meaner things, by instinct led,
Are rarely known to stray."

"And it is not only in the brute creation that we see moral qualities displayed," said Mrs. Percy; "we may learn something even from birds and insects, as Edward can tell you in two lines." "Oh yes," said Edward, "I know what you mean, mamma:

"And from the most minute and mean,
A virtuous mind may morals glean."

"Yes, there is love between brothers and sisters to be learnt from birds," said Isabella. "And industry from the bee," said Catharine;

"The daily labours of the bee
Awake my soul to industry."

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"Ah," said Isabella, "John can tell you something more about that from Gay's fables." "Yes," said John, "there is—let us see, there is—Oh, I have it—

"Who can observe the careful ant,
And not provide for future want?"

"Very well, indeed, John," said Col. M.; "your quotation puts me in mind of a very curious account which I read lately of some of those prudent little ants. It is related by a gentleman who had himself watched them for some time; and I found it so entertaining, that I copied it out for the amusement of my young friends. Stay; I think I have it here," said he, bringing out of his pocket an enormous pocket-book: "let me see, ay! here it is! Sit down all of you, and I will try and make it out."

"Stop a minute, while I snuff the

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candles," said Edward. "And do wait a minute, I am not settled, I am not comfortable yet," said the eager Catharine, lifting up the great footstool in her arms, which she contrived to wedge in between his arm-chair and the fire—"*now* it will do," said she. In another minute they were all seated firm as statues, with their eyes fixed, and waiting for this curious account, which Col. Mordaunt began as follows.

ANECDOTES OF THE ANT.

"In a room next to mine, which had been empty for a long time, there was upon a window a box full of earth, fit to keep flowers in. As there had been no

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flowers in it for a long time, it was covered with bits of tile, and plaster, and rubbish that had fallen from the top of the house. The window looked to the south—was sheltered from the wind—and a little way off there was a granary of corn: so that altogether it was one of the best of places for ants to live in. If you or I were going to build a house, we should try to find just such a convenient spot of ground.

"As I was very fond of flowers, I planted a tulip-root in the old box, hoping to have the pleasure of seeing it grow: but while I was doing this, I found three nests of ants. As I looked at the little creatures running up and down, and seeming so happy and so busy, I could not but think it would be a sad pity to disturb them for the sake

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of a flower: so I took away my root, and determined to watch my little ants every day; and true it was, that they amused and pleased me more than all the flowers in the world could have done!

"I made it my business to procure for them all sorts of conveniences. I took out of the box every thing that might be troublesome; and I went very often to pay them a visit, at all times of the day, and sometimes I got up in the night, and watched them by moonlight. I always found them at their work; when all other animals appeared to be at rest, still these little creatures were running about, and going up and down as busy as ever: one would think they never slept.

"The chief business of an ant is to collect corn in the summer for food in the

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winter. I believe every body knows that ants take their grains of corn under-ground in the night-time, and bring them out in the day to dry in the sun. If you have ever observed an ant-hill, I dare say you have seen these little hillocks of corn lying out by the side of the hill. As I very well knew that ants were in the habit of doing this, I was a good deal surprised when I found that my ants did just the contrary; they kept their corn snugly under-ground all the day-time, while the sun was the hottest, and brought it out (like simpletons as I thought) only to lay it out in the moonshine. But I soon perceived that they had the best reasons for this.

"There was a pigeon-house at no great distance, and the pigeons were continually flying to this window, and if by

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chance a single grain of corn was to be found, they would fly off with it in a moment; so the ants were wise to hide their treasure from the sight of these thieves.

"But as soon as I found out how it was, I determined to release them from the fear of such troublesome neighbours; and I fastened some bits of paper upon sticks like little flags, and stuck them round the box; and whenever I saw a pigeon bold enough to be coming near my flags, I went to the window, and made a great shouting noise, and frightened them so much that after once or twice they gave the matter up, and never came again.

"Soon afterwards, to my great surprise and pleasure, I saw the little ants venturing to bring out a grain or two of their corn by day-light; and in a little

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while, finding it was untouched, and that they had nothing more to fear, they brought it all out with the same regularity as other ants.

"There is in every ant's nest a straight hole about half an inch deep, and then it goes down sloping into a place where they keep their corn, as we do in a granary. The corn that is laid up in these little granaries, would shoot under-ground, and begin to grow, which would not answer their purpose at all. So they take care to prevent this by biting off all the buds before they lay it up.

"But there is another mischief that might attend their corn,—it might swell with the damp of the ground and grow mouldy, and unfit for use; to prevent this, therefore, they take the utmost pains to prepare a sort of dry earth, and

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when the corn is laid up in this, it will keep as long and as dry as in the farmer's best granary. They are therefore as careful to keep the earth as dry as the corn. Their method of packing it together under-ground is this:—they first of all spread the earth, and then they lay the corn upon it, and then they cover the corn with some more earth, and every day they take it all up to the top of the nest and lay it out to dry; and if you watch you will see that, *first*, every ant comes up with a load of earth, till in about a quarter of an hour a heap of earth is made. Then they come up each carrying a grain of corn, and when they have made a heap of that, they bring up more earth, which shews plainly in what order it is laid together.

"All this they never fail to do when

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the weather is fine, but if it rains, they know better; and what is more astonishing, they seem to know when it is going to rain, and never venture to expose the corn in a dull or cloudy day!

"I found out that these ants of mine collected their stores from an old granary where corn of different sorts was kept. They always choose wheat rather than any other sort.

"Having a mind to try how persevering and industrious they would be in collecting their stores, I shut up the garret in every way, and stopt every hole I could find, and at the same time I laid in the corner of my own room a heap of corn. I knew my little friends to be very clever, but I did not take them for conjurors, and expect that they would immediately run to the heap,

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but I was curious to see what they would do.

"For some days they seemed in great perplexity, running about in all directions, and some of them going out and returning so late, that I suppose they went a great way for provisions. Many were disappointed, and could not find what they wanted, but I observed they were ashamed to return quite without; if they could not get one thing, they brought another; if a grain of wheat was not to be found, they carried home a grain of rye, or of oats, or barley, or at least a piece of earth.

"The window where they lived looked into a garden, and was two stories high; to the further end of this garden would they sometimes travel in search of corn.

"It was a very hard journey back;

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a grain of corn is a very heavy burden for an ant, as much as it has strength to carry; and the bringing back such a load from the garden to the nest required four hours of unceasing labour.

"And then how great is the hardship of a poor ant, when she carries a grain of corn to the second story! climbing up the wall with her head downwards, and her hinder legs upwards! None can have any notion of it, till they have seen the little creatures at work in such a situation; the frequent stops they make at the most convenient places, shew plainly their great weariness. Some are scarcely able to reach their journey's end; in which case, some of the strong ones, who have carried home their loads, come down again to help them.

"I saw one of the smallest carrying a

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large grain of wheat which she tried with all her might to bring safely home: after a very toilsome march, just as she reached the box where the nest was, she made so much haste, that she fell all the way down again with her load.

"Such an unlucky accident would have discouraged most of us. I went down and found her with the same corn in her paws; she was ready to climb up again.

"The same misfortune happened to her for three times.

"Once she fell in the middle of the way, once when she was higher, but still she did not let go her hold, and was not discouraged, till at last her strength quite failed her; she stopped, and another ant helped to bring home her load. It was one of the largest and finest grains of wheat that an ant can carry.

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"If you are amused with this account of these wonderful little insects, some time or other I will tell you more stories about them; for I went on for a long time to watch them, and always found out something new, and something curious to reward me for my pains. I took a great delight in doing them any little good offices in my power; and I have never since passed by an ant-hill without remembering that what looked only like a heap of mould, contains a society of little active industrious creatures, whose diligence and perseverance in doing their duty is an example to me and all the world; and with this thought, I take particular care to step aside, that I may not disturb their proceedings, or destroy their dwellings by treading upon their nest.

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"'Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise.'"

"Well, I never heard any thing so curious!" said Catharine. "And I am sure we *are* amused with his account," said Isabella, "so I hope the good gentleman will give us some more of it, as he promises."

"Amused!" said Edward, "yes, indeed, I think no one can read it without being amused. So, my dear uncle, I hope if ever you meet with any thing more about these clever little creatures, you will copy it out for us." "Oh yes, do uncle," said John, "and in the mean time, I will tell you what *I* will do. I will put some mould into a box, and buy

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some grains of corn of farmer White, and put the box in the window, and scatter the corn just by it, and so entice some ants to come and live there. Do you think they will come, uncle?" continued he, with eagerness. "I think *not*, my little fellow," said Col. M., "for in the first place there would be little chance of the ants which crawl on the ground, getting a sight of your box of mould and corn, however tempting they might be when seen.

"Then, besides, there would be the difficult labour of climbing up to your window, which no ant, how active and industrious soever, would *prefer*, when she might as well choose her abode any where else."

"But then, how did the gentleman

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ants come to live there?" said John, somewhat disappointed.

"Why that is the wonder," said Col. M., "and as it is a wonder, is not likely to occur twice. Some straggling ants must have been taken up in the mould with which he filled his box for his tulip, and there laid eggs, till they grew a large family, and in time a community. But, John, there are plenty of ant-hills out of doors, and in the summer you may watch their movements, and see them lay out their corn, and carry it about.

"And now, my dear children," said their affectionate uncle, "good night. To-morrow morning I must leave you; when I come again, I hope to bring a fresh supply of interesting anecdotes and tales

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with which to amuse you." "What, is your visit over?" said one. "And cannot you stay with us *one* more day?" said another. "My dear children," said Col. M., "I *must* go to-morrow, but I trust to see you again next year, and hope to find you in health, and growing in virtue and goodness." "Oh dear, and it will be a whole year before you come back again; what *shall* we do till then?" said they, the tears filling their eyes. "What shall you do till then?" said Col. M. "why I will tell you what you shall do; first dry your tears, and listen to me. You have now, my dear children," continued he, "enjoyed a merry and a happy Christmas, have you not?" "Oh yes, that we have, *very* happy," cried they all with eagerness. "And will you not now that it is over, in gratitude to your mother and to

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me, who have contrived so much for your pleasure and amusement—will you not now return to your studies and usual occupation with fresh ardour and diligence, and by employing well the intermediate time, and pursuing a right line of conduct, shew yourselves deserving of the same indulgence when the season for it returns?" "Oh yes, that we will!" said they, eagerly, "we will indeed, uncle." "Your dear mother," continued the Colonel, "feels as much, I will venture to say, at my departure as you can do, and I should wish to leave her not with a party of crying grumblers, but with affectionate and grateful companions, who are trying to make her happy, and by cheerful and ready obedience to recompense the cares in which her life is spent." "Dear uncle," said Isabella,

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"you shall have your wish." "And I will not cry any more," said Catharine. "And I will set down to my Greek directly you are gone, to-morrow," said Edward. "And I will take my Selectæ Prophanis, and be as busy as an ant," said little John, whose head was still full of the "curious account." "There's my own children," said Col. M., "and good night to you all!" The morrow came, a sad to-morrow to all! for though they none of them failed in the laudable resolutions of the preceding night, yet they saw the trunks corded, and other preparations made for their good uncle's departure, with heavy hearts; and their spirits quite failed them when they came to the sad part of bidding farewell. In spite of their determination not to cry, the tears poured down their cheeks, as

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they embraced their dear uncle by turns, as they shook hands with his faithful Black, and kissed and patted the poor unconscious Nelson. With streaming eyes they watched the carriage as it drove along the park, and out at the lodge gate. When it was quite out of sight, however, they turned from the window, and seeing their mother also in tears, they recollected the parting advice of their uncle, and drying their eyes, determined to waste no more time in fruitless lamentation, but in thankful enjoyment of the blessings that remained to them, to look forward to the happy time of his return."

And here I must take leave of my young readers for the present; but to

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those who have been amused by this little book, I think I can promise an account of Col. Mordaunt's next visit to Petty Hall, as I have a notion that he means to surprise them by his unexpected appearance at Easter; although, as his plans are uncertain, he is unwilling to raise expectations in the minds of the children, which it may not be in his power to fulfil.

THE END.

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